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REMARKS

Applicant kindly appreciates the courtesy of Examiner Poon conducting a telephone interview with Applicant's representative on May 30, 2006. During the interview, Applicant's representative described the Applicant's claimed invention and distinguished the independent claims from the prior art, in particular, the Matsuda reference. The Examiner agreed that the following amendment would distinguish over the cited prior art, where the independent claims are amended to recite: at least first and second print jobs whose passwords are entered, where the first and second print jobs are held in a queue prior to printing the password-protected print jobs. As provided herein, all of the independent claims include the above limitations.

Claims 1-24 are pending in the application. Independent claims 1, 15-19, 22, and 24 have been amended by the present amendment. The amendments are fully supported by the application as originally filed.

As amended, independent claims 1, 15-19, 22, and 24 recite that at least first and second print jobs have their passwords entered, and the print jobs are held in a queue prior to printing, where priority is established by order of entry of passwords.

Claims 1-7, 9-16, 18, 19, and 24 were rejected under 35 USC 102(e) as being anticipated by U.S. Patent 6,058,249 to Matsuda et al. ("Matsuda"). Claims 8, 17, and 20-22 were rejected under 35 USC 103(a) as being unpatentable over Matsuda in view of U.S. Patent 6,567,180 to Kageyama et al. ("Kageyama"). Claim 23 was rejected under 35 USC 103(a) as being unpatentable over Matsuda in view of Kageyama, and further in view of U.S. Patent 5,956,471 to Ueda et al. These rejections are respectfully traversed.

Matsuda does not teach or suggest a printing apparatus, method, or system in which at least first and second print jobs have their passwords entered, and the print jobs are held in a queue prior to printing.

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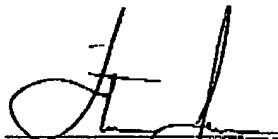
Applicant's remarks in the Amendment filed on December 23, 2005 are incorporated by reference herein.

In Matsuda, upon entry of a password to a single confidential print job that is held in a queue, the confidential print job is printed prior to a normal print job waiting to be printed that does not require password entry. As described in Matsuda, when two or more print jobs are simultaneously generated, the print job of the highest priority level is executed prior to any other print job (see column 23, lines 58-61). For a single confidential print job, the confidential print job is initially registered at the lowest priority level, and then after the password is entered, its priority level is increased (see column 23, lines 31-37; column 23, line 62 to column 24, line 3).

In other words, the Matsuda reference only addresses an arrangement where a password is entered for a single confidential print job, where the priority level of the confidential print job is increased after entry of the password. Matsuda does not teach or suggest an arrangement for printing multiple password-protected print jobs in which at least first and second print jobs have their passwords entered, and the print jobs are held in a queue prior to printing.

It is believed that the claims are in condition for immediate allowance, which action is earnestly solicited.

Respectfully submitted,

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